

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: February 11, 2016

Agenda Item: 2016-2017 Deer Hunting Seasons, Quota Ranges and HD Boundaries

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 30 minutes

Background

Season structures and hunting district boundaries are adopted biennially for most game species. This happens every other year between December and final adoptions in February. In proposing regulations to the Commission, FWP proposes adopting the existing (2015) structure except for specific changes. Proposals are based on population status and/or other circumstances.

Deer populations in much of the state are recovering from lows of a few years ago and growing substantially. For the 2016 and 2017 mule deer and white-tailed deer season structure, some of the more significant proposed changes include liberalizing seasons. Region 1 is proposing going to antlerless white-tailed deer opportunities the first and last week of the general season, many hunting districts in Regions 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 propose going to either-sex mule deer during the general season, and there are a number of proposed mule deer B License opportunities. Region 1 is also proposing offering handicapped hunters with Permission To Hunt From a Vehicle (PTHFV) the opportunity to take either-sex white-tailed deer during the entire general season in most hunting districts.

For other proposed changes see Commission Master List for the December meeting.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Deer season comments were received during scoping and included interest in antlerless opportunities and buck harvest management. Public comment ran from Dec. 10 to Jan 22. Via survey monkey we received 223 and 11 by email in combination. There were over 550 people who attended public meetings across the state and provided numerous comments. Most spoke to HD-specific concerns, but overall two thirds of hunters outside of R1 that mentioned doe harvest favored increased opportunity. Among 49 comments on R1's ES proposal 18 opposed and 30 favored. A number of comments spoke to buck management.

Alternatives and Analysis

Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2015 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting justifications behind proposals.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

Rationale for individual proposals was included in the Dec. 10th Commission information packets and may be further articulated at the Feb. 11th Commission meeting.

Proposed Motion

I move the Commission adopt the final 2016 and 2017 Deer Hunting Seasons and Hunting Districts as presented by FWP. I also move to adopt all other portions of the previous 2014-2015 deer season regulations not affected by the Commission's actions today.